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- USSR -

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FOREWORD

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V. I. LENIN ON STATE DISCIPLINE IN ECONOMIC CONSTRUCTION
--USSR--

Following is a translation of an unsigned article in the Russian language periodical Partiynaya zhizn' (Party Life), Moscow, No. 6, March 1960, pages 62-67.

The administration of the economy in our country is built on the basis of the Leninist principle of democratic centralism. This makes it possible to utilize in the best manner the advantages of the socialist system, to organically combine the planned, centralized direction of the economy with broad local initiative.

Our party shows constant concern for strengthening the principles of planning in economic construction, for educating all members of society, above all the directing cadres, in a spirit of the strictest observance of state discipline. In the documents and materials of the XX and XXI Congresses of the party and the plenums of the CC CPSU there is great emphasis on not allowing any retreats from the planned assignments, all arbitrariness in the direction of the economy being condemned. The June 1959 Plenum of the CC CPSU again focused the attention of the whole party to these questions, requiring of the party organizations a strengthening of their control over the fulfillment of the plans; over the observance of state discipline. The successful realization of the Seven-Year Plan greatly depends on the careful and well-coordinated work of all links of the national economy, the effective and purposeful utilization of the financial, material, and labor reserves of the country in the interests of the state.

A socialist state is called upon to direct the economic development of the country, to set it on the road to Communism, to control the measure of labor and the measure of consumption, to defend the socialist gains from our enemies, to guarantee the continuous improvement of the workers' living conditions. In order to successfully solve these tasks, firm state discipline is needed, guaranteeing fulfillment of the plans; exact observance of the laws is required.

The necessity of unity and discipline is dictated by the character of the socialist economic system, by the fact that public ownership of the tools and means of production forms the basis of our society.

V. I. Lenin explained that the workers and peasants can build socialism and Communism only when there is a concentrated and planned distribution of the maximum part of the state raw material, food-stuffs, fuel, monetary and other resources. "Socialism," he emphasized, "is unthinkable... without a planned state organization..." (Soch. /Collected Works_, Volume 27, page 306).

Since the first days of the establishment of the Soviet power, the Communist Party has waged an insistent struggle for the creation of socialist discipline, for the planned regulation of the economic life. A calculated and planned distribution of all forms of foodstuffs and fuel was organized. The party decisively opposed regionalism and separatist activities, the attempt to put local interests in the foreground at the expense of national interests.

The many years of the educational work of the party has led to a situation in which strict observance of state discipline has become the rule in the work of our state, social, and economic organizations. Nevertheless, the facts show that even now there are individual workers who violate state discipline. Some understood the reorganization of the administration of industry and construction in such a way that the exact observation of the plan should now lack its former importance. But this is a delusion. Communism is the most highly organized society, V. I. Lenin noted. Therefore it is natural that as we come closer to Communism, the role of the principle of planning in economic construction does not decrease but actually increases.

So that the principle of conducting the economy in accordance with definite plans, and state discipline, may be firm, it is first of all necessary, as Lenin showed, to establish the proper interrelationships between the center and local areas and to consistently realize democratic centralism. The basis of such interrelationships under the conditions of a socialist state is a close relating of fundamental state interests to local interests, of state direction from above to the independence of the local areas in the choice of ways to best solve the particular task. The priority of state and national interests over the interests of the separate oblasts, republics, and krays, is indisputable.

Does this mean that local needs are ignored? Not at all. If local interests are borne in mind in their totality, they may be the more fully satisfied only with the support and assistance of the state. Lenin showed that strict observance of discipline, of a centralized planning principle on a country-wide scale, not only does not exclude but surely suggests the broad initiative of the local organs,

the maximum development of the creative activity of the laboring masses. "Centralism, understood in the really democratic sense," said he, "suggests for the first time the opportunity created by history for full and unimpeded development not only of local peculiarities, but of local initiative, a variety of ways, devices, and means toward the common goal." (Soch., Vol. 27, p. 181).

It is enough to examine the works of V. I. Lenin for 1921-1923 to see how often he turned the attention of the party and state organs to the all-inclusive support of local experience, local initiative. His speeches, articles, letters, notes of this time, are filled with the concern that, based on local experience, the creative energy of the masses might be more fully utilized in the socialist economy. At the same time, he calls us to initiate planning, calculations, control; to strengthen socialist discipline; to improve the organization of production; to perfect the administration of the national economy.

When the party condemns some individual acts of local organs, it does this not because it rejects creativity in the local areas. The party has worked for and is now working for an over-all increase in initiative from below--the activity and independent action of the masses. This, in particular, is clearly shown by the support given by the party and the government to the numerous undertakings aimed at premature fulfillment of the Seven-Year Plan.

But we do not need just any kind of initiative, but only the kind which does not contradict the interests of the state and the nation. Calling for the over-all strengthening of the local organs, for a development of their activity, V. I. Lenin decisively opposed localist tendencies, the non-execution of the directives of the central organs of authority, local "concoctions." The localist approach contradicts the very essence of the socialist system of economy and is a great danger in any of its forms.

When V. I. Lenin found out about the cases of interference by the organs of local authority in the economic-administrative functions of the plant administrations of the state enterprises, he sent, on 2 November 1918, to the local areas instructions in which, as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, he wrote: "...I urgently repeat with a warning about the strictest responsibility in the case of non-execution: the national enterprises are the common achievement of the Soviet Republic and responsibility for the economic conduct of their affairs is borne by the plant administration; therefore the local organs of authority do not have the right (if it is not given them by special resolutions of the central power) to interfere in their

orders and to alienate any property whatever of the national enterprises..." (Leninskiy sbornik [Lenin Collections_/, XXXVI, page 62).

Self-seeking attitudes and localist influence Lenin considered the greatest evils. When he encountered such, he demanded a careful investigation and punishment of the self-seekers (removal from work, arrest, etc.). In the draft drawn up by Lenin of the "Instructions from the Council of Labor and Defense to the local soviet institutions" there was a special demand to submit specific information: "What was the punishment meted out to workers who satisfied the local areas at the expense of the center and against the orders of the center? What are the names of those punished? Are instances of such violations decreasing? Has the measure of punishment been raised? If so, exactly how?" (Soch., Vol./32, p. 365).

Localism shows itself, of course, not in the local organs' concern for local needs, for the success of local industry. Such concern is natural and necessary. Localism is of another color. At the June 1959 Plenum of the CC CPSU, facts were brought forth revealing that the directors of local soviet and economic organs had arbitrarily utilized for local needs the capital-investment and material resources intended for fulfillment of the state plan. Individual enterprises had fulfilled the local orders at the expense of the fulfillment of cooperative deliveries. This is localism, and it deserves the harshest punishment. It is not difficult to separate such occurrences from the truly necessary and rightful concern for local needs. Localism, Lenin said, expresses itself in disregard for the interests of the state, in an attempt to "set one's own interests, the interests of one's own factory, one's own industry, higher than the interests of society." So as not to err in practical work, it is necessary to take into consideration how much an intended step corresponds to the policies of the party; to be sure that local, group, or departmental interests do not rise above the interests of the nation, of the state.

An important condition for maintaining state discipline is the exact observance by the local organs of the laws of the Soviet State, of the requirements and instructions of its central organs. Drawing a fine line as regards the question as to the spheres of public life in which an account of local conditions is necessary, and where unity is necessary, in his letter "On Dual Subordination and Legality" Lenin, noted that, as distinct from agriculture, which is different in Kaluga Province from that in Kazan Province, legality cannot be different for Kaluga and Kazan, but must be one--Russian.

Mentioning this, he strove to have all consider the execution of the laws and directives of the center their highest duty. Insofar as the direction of local economic life was carried out at that time by the provincial sovnarkhozes /sovery narodnogo khozyaystva--Councils of the National Economy/, the party increased as much as possible their responsibility regarding the fulfillment of the instructions of the center. The decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, published 10 February 1920, "On Local Economic Organs," stated that all orders of the center for the sovnarkhozes were mandatory. The resolution noted that the fulfillment of local orders could be done "only in cases where it does not interfere with the fulfillment of the plans and assignments of the main administration."

The numerous Lenin documents show clearly that when a matter concerned the observation of legality, Lenin always showed his characteristic firmness and inflexibility. He not only called upon us to "observe piously the laws and instructions of the Soviet government, and to see to their execution by all" (Soch., Vol. 29, p. 514), but in practice he firmly urged that the decrees of the VTsIK /Vserossiyskiy tsentral'nyy ispolnitel'nyy komitet --All-Russian Central Executive Committee/, the decrees of the government, and the orders of the central government be strictly executed locally. Any direct or indirect attempts to weaken or slow down the orders of state authority he considered the greatest distortion of the basic principles of the Soviet government, as a threat to the holy of holies, as a rejection of socialism.

Lenin's evaluations of the importance of socialist legality have not lost their force even now. The solution of the complex tasks of the building of Communism demands the strict observance of the laws and orders of the state organs. Our party and its Central Committee pay great attention to this. They decisively condemn those workers who, as comrade N. S. Khrushchev says, "do not take into consideration the state interests, exceed their authority, conduct themselves as if the laws were not written for them, act on the principle of what I want, I do."

V. I. Lenin attached great importance to unwavering local observance of the financial policies of the Soviet state, to the proper expenditure of state funds. This is necessary, he explained, so that the state may expand the economy according to the plan, according to the interests of socialism and Communism, and thus more fully satisfy the needs of the workers. Speaking at the All-Russian Congress of Representatives of the Financial Departments of the Councils, Lenin said, "I am in favor of the broadest autonomy of the local soviet organizations, but I think also

that for the fruitfulness of our work in consciously transforming the country we need a single, strictly defined financial policy and the execution of instructions from the higher to the lower echelons." This instruction of Lenin later received legislative form. The decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of 10 October 1921, "On Measures to Regulate the Financial Economy," recommended that all local soviets and other soviet institutions and enterprises "observe for their information and direct guidance that the interests of the national treasury are the interests of the higher state order, that the complete safeguarding of these interests is the duty of each soviet institution and enterprise and each responsible person."

Considering the great importance of caring for and properly expending the financial means to create a socialist economy, Lenin maliciously castigated the directors who "do not concern themselves with putting to work the kopeck given them, who do not try to make 2 kopecks of it, yet make up plans for billions..." (Soch., Vol. 33, p. 200). The workers who show their "broad nature" at the expense of state funds, who think only of how to get more away from the state, should remember these words of Lenin, in the name of which they are trusted to run the economy.

A reliable means in the struggle to strengthen discipline in economic construction is the exemplary organization of accounts and control. "Accounts and control--this is the most important thing required for 'adjusting' for the proper functioning of the first phase of a Communist society" (Soch., Vol. 25, p. 44). Miscalculation, error, or deception of the state inevitably harms the work of many enterprises, and therewith the various branches of the national economy and the welfare of the workers.

Eyewash, all dishonest changes made in the accounts by careerists and irresponsible people--these V. I. Lenin considered the gravest crime, demanding that the guilty persons be severely punished for deceiving the Soviet state. He wanted the local accounts to be "most accurate, most complete and exact." "Accurate accounts are mandatory..," says the draft of the "Instructions from the Council of Labor and Defense to the local soviet institutions" (Soch., Vol. 32, p. 371).

In a letter to G. M. Krzhizhanovskiy in February of 1921, speaking of the tasks of the Gosplan, V. I. Lenin directs particular attention to the duty of his workers to "look carefully into the facts and figures of the actual fulfillment of our economic plans," suggesting that these data be published "for public criticism and control" (Soch., Vol. 35, p. 407).

The utilization of varied forms of control from below, the broader drawing of the masses into the control of the work of both local and central institutions, helps greatly to strengthen discipline and order in state affairs.

The safeguarding of state discipline and state interests --this Lenin considered the first duty of all party organizations. He said that the party organizations are called upon to conduct the policies of the party regardless of local influences; for them the interests of the state and country are highest of all. Communists must serve as an example of the observance of state discipline. This demand of Lenin is entered in the Charter of the CPSU, which says that a member of the party "must observe party and state discipline, which is equally required of all members of the party." The party views a violation of state discipline as a great evil, and considers it incompatible with membership in its ranks. Directing the attention of the party organizations to the fact that without discipline no normal economic work is possible, V. I. Lenin set the task of "checking in a most attentive manner the fulfillment of the assignments of the party and the tasks and demands of the Soviet government" (Soch., Vol 30, p 120). He saw the most effective form of checking in personal familiarization with the state of affairs, a check on the spot.

In the struggle for the strengthening of discipline, great importance is attached to the fact that the local party organizations of the production and trade enterprises are given the right to control the work of the administration. Utilizing this, communists are active fighters for the improvement of the work of industry, construction, transportation, agriculture. In the summer of 1959, the CC CPSU undertook an important new step in this direction: it was resolved to form in the local party organizations of the production and trade enterprises commissions to exercise the right of control over the work of the administration. This intensified the role and responsibility of the party organizations in realizing the state plans and aided the further strengthening of state discipline.

In order to better draw the masses into control work, to increase their activity in economic construction, the party has recently taken steps to further democratize the administration of production. Among these measures, a most important one is the creation at the enterprises of permanent production meetings. Expanding democratic principles in the administration of production, the party is simultaneously striving to establish the strictest responsibility for executive functions. Lenin never tired of repeating that in

providing for strong state discipline, "striving for personal responsibility is most important" (Soch., Vol. 35, p. 450). Where important state measures were concerned, he always demanded that such responsibility be established in all links of the state and economic apparatus.

Observed consciously, discipline is strong. Therefore the increase in what is required of the cadres, in responsibility for the fulfillment of the state assignments, must be combined with educational work among the directors and among the broad masses. Lenin turned his attention to this more than once. Calling on us to education the Soviet citizen in a spirit of thorough understanding of state interests, he set the task that "each conscious worker feel that he is not only master in his own plant, but a representative of the country, that he feel responsibility" (Soch., Vol. 27, p. 367). Decreeing that certain orders are mandatory, adopting good laws--this is not all. "...in themselves laws count very little," Lenin pointed out. "Much educational, organizational, cultural work is required..." Teaching a conscientious attitude toward the state plans and assignments, toward Soviet laws, is the direct duty of the party, trade-union, and komsomol organizations.

Under the Soviet government the Lenin principles of democratic centralism, which are the basis of the state and economic construction, have convincingly shown their vitality and force. The solution of the great complex tasks of the building of Communism brings forth the further strengthening of state discipline among the most important questions. Drawing attention to its timeliness, comrade N. S. Khrushchev said at the June Plenum of the CC CPSU: "The question of party and state discipline is the principle of principles in the work of all cadres of the party and state apparatus. There is no room for workers who, in receiving a particular assignment, can say: 'if I want, I'll fulfill it; if not, I won't.' Once a decision is taken, no one has the right to violate it..."

"We must struggle decisively against violations of party and state discipline, in whatever form they appear. The cadres must be educated to observe the interests of the party and state, with no exceptions. Without this, comrades, we cannot successfully move ahead."

Lenin's instructions and notes on these questions are valuable, because they provide a key to the solution of many practical problems; they show how to approach these problems from the state positions; they teach our cadres how to guard the interests of the workers, the interests of the nation.